

the advertisement of their clothing store and that Dangerfield did not receive any benefit from the use of the Winfield packet, then they are not in breach. Hence, the legal argument would revolve around the question of whether the image of a Winfield packet which constitutes the entire background of the Dangerfield advertisement is “incidental” or not.nuscript).

From a public health perspective, it would seem quite clear that this series of advertisements promotes Winfield cigarettes in addition to promoting the Dangerfield clothing company. Of even greater concern is that the promotion is targeted at young people who attend nightclubs, a group known to be at high risk of smoking (Schofield *et al*, unpublished manuscript).

From a legal point of view, the issue is less clear cut. Pursuing legal redress against a popular clothing company poses a dilemma for public health authorities, as launching a legal challenge may only serve to alienate the target group with which we wish to communicate.

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Cigarette ads revive spirit of Joe Camel

Mighty nasty.

The new slogan for Camel cigarettes and Camel Lights from Mezzina/Brown (advertising agency), New York, is supposed to be “Mighty tasty”. And it would seem to have a rather pleasing combination of directness and playfulness—until you realise what they are up to, which, of course, is the usual.

The usual trolling for adolescents, that is.

Having taken a stab at more adult imagery, the brand that improved its market share and wrecked its industry with the infamous Joe Camel cartoon is backsliding into juvenalia with a smart-alecky campaign that trades on a Joe Camel-like dose of attitude.

One of the spreads (figure 1) shows a handsome young man running for his life from a shabby farmhouse, where the incensed, geezerish farmer is chasing him with a double-barrel shotgun, and the young, blond farmer's daughter is in bed, sucking on a post-coital Camel. The farmer is old and dresses like Elmer Fudd. The fleeing travelling salesman is young and buff, so guess who we're supposed to be rooting for?

On one level, for the shallow and unworldly, this ad trades on the threadbare fantasy. But for extra credit it takes a self-mocking tone in discovery of its own inner cliché. A prominent “Viewer Discretion Advised” warning in the



Figure 1

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corner calls attention to: “SS. Satisfied Smoking. FV. Farm Violence. AN. Animal Nudity.”

Another ad (figure 2) has the same approach. It depicts the butler and the babe-alicious maid in an aristocratic home conspiratorially defiling the meal with a cigarette ash before serving their mean employers, who are in the opulent dining room callously ringing the service bell.

The scenario plays off the insipid noble poor versus evil rich class-hatred mentality that made *Titanic* such a hit with teenage girls. But, once again, the ad comments on itself via the warning panel (IR. Idle Rich. ABR. Abusive Bell Ringing. PA. Premeditated Ashing.).

This sort of postmodern self-reference isn’t as clever as it thinks it is, nor even all that amusing. What it is, however, is precisely the tack taken by many marketers to appeal to the supposedly media-wise younger generation.

How young?

Very young. For instance, the principal practitioner of this strategy is Sprite [a soft drink].

Meantime, the whole idea of lampooning viewer-discretion advisories seems calculated to ridicule and undercut the whole class of authoritarian warnings such as, um, just to name one: SMOKING CAUSES LUNG CANCER, HEART DISEASE, EMPHYSEMA AND MAY COMPLICATE PREGNANCY.

Hmmm, let’s see. Who most responds to attacks on authority? Is it adults? No, not adults. Why—you know what—it’s teenagers! For gosh sakes, it’s probably just a coincidence.

It’s probably just a coincidence that, after being shamed into retiring Joe Camel, and replacing him with a sophisticated (and quite magnificent) campaign aimed clearly at adults, and watching sales flatten, RJ Reynolds is back with ads using the psychology, sensibilities and iconography of the MTV crowd.



Figure 2

This stuff isn’t as nakedly despicable as Joe Camel, who seduced not only teenagers but small children. And it’s tempting to give RJR the benefit of the doubt when it argues this campaign is aimed at over-21-year-olds.

But, once again, advertising is a shotgun, not a rifle, and the issue is who unavoidably—or intentionally—will be caught in the spray. Considering the company’s history, and these ads’ sly assault on protectors of the commonweal, giving RJR the benefit of any doubt would be, shall we say, mighty hasty.

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